

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 06477 240859Z  
ACTION EA-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
HA-05 EUR-12 /083 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2476  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6477

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, KS  
SUBJ: CATHOLICS IN CHONJU CLASH WITH POLICE

1. FROM JULY 5 UNTIL RECENTLY, CHONJU HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF TENSION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND POLICE. EVIDENTLY AS PART OF INCREASED POLICE ATTENTION DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE NCU WOULD BE ELECTING PRESIDENT PARK, POLICE IN CHONJU SHADOWED A GROUP OF PRIESTS WHO WERE ON THEIR WAY TO ATTEND AN ORDINATION. THIS PROMPTED A PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AT THE CATHOLIC CENTER. THEN ON JULY 6 POLICE SOUGHT TO QUESTFON TWO PRIESTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL DECLARATION. EVIDENTLY, A GROUP OF PRIESTS TRIED TO SHIELD THE TWO BEIN SOUGHT AND IN THE PUSHING AND SHOVING WHICH ENSUED ONE PRIEST, A FATHER PAK CHONG-SANG, WAS INJURED SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO REQUIRE HOSPITALIZATION. A SPATE OF PROTESTS FOLLOWED AND POLICE INTERRUPTION OF A PROTEST MARCH ON JULY 10 RESULTED IN THE ROUGHING UP OF ANOTHER PRIEST, FATHER KANG TOK-HAENG, AND, IN ADDITION, SOME NUNS HAD THEIR HEADDRESSES PULLED AWRY. PROTESTS CONTINUED, INCLUDING SPECIAL CHURCH SURVICES AND HUNGER  
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STRIKES, UNTIL THE WEEK OF JULY 17 TO 21 APPROXIMATELY.

2. THE TWO PRIESTS WHOM THE POLICE WISHED TO QUESTION, FATHERS MUN CHONG-HYON AND YI SU-HYON WERE DETAINED ON JULY 6 AND RELEASED ON JULY 8.

3. THE BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE HAS BEEN OUT OF THE

COUNTRY DURING THESE EVENTS AND BISHOPS FROM OTHER PLACES, INCLUDING CARDINAL KIM, VISITED THE AREA TO TALK TO PRIESTS AND THE AUTHORITIES THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD. THE POLICE CHIEF AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR HAVE REPORTEDLY APOLOGIZED ORALLY TO THE CHURCHMEN AND HAVE VISITED THE HOSPITALIZED PRIEST. PRIESTS ACTIVE IN THE CONTROVERSY PREFER TO HAVE THE APOLOGY PUT IN WRITTEN FORM AND PUBLISHED IN THE CHONJU PAPERS. STILL, THE ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION APPEARS TO HAVE PASSED ITS PEAK.

4. CHONJU HAS 60,000 CATHOLICS -- PERHAPS IN THE SAME LEAGUE OF INFLUENCE IN THE CHURCH AS INCHON (70,000), TAEJON (69,000 OR SUWON (76,000). HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT PRIESTS WERE STRUCK BY POLICE, HAS GALVANIZED ALMOST THE ENTIRE CLERGY OF THE CHONJU DIOCESE INTO CRITICISM OF THE ROKG, A SITUATION WHICH WAS NOT THE RULE IN THIS DIOCESE OR ELSEWHERE, AND HAS SHOCKED CHURCHMEN AND LAITY IN OTHER DIOCESES AS WELL. DESPITE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THESE INCIDENTS WERE THE RESULT OF SLOPPY POLICE TACTICS AND THE FACT THAT THE POLICE ARE, UNCHARACTERISTICALLY, APOLOGETIC IN EVERY WAY BUT WRITTEN FORM, THESE INCIDENTS WILL CREATE AN ADDITIONAL STRAIN BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE REGIME. GLEYSTEN

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## Message Attributes

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